

# **AN HONEST CHURCH HISTORY**

Prior to joining the Branch Davidian Seventh Day Adventists on Oct. 22, 1987 (when I kept my first Atonement), I did not think that there was persecution of churches in America. Back then George Roden said to me, "When you start doing God's work, Satan will sure raise enemies against you." I didn't answer, but I thought "Smoke, he's blowing smoke, I mean really, Satan!"

On Oct. 21, 1987 (and again of Oct. 23, 1987, but that's another story), I married George Roden by contract becoming a polygamous second wife under the Mosiac Law. (Ex. 21:10). It was painless polygamy, George's other wife, Carmen, had left him and was living in Israel. It was also my choice, since I do not believe in divorce because of Christ's words. (Matt. 5:31,32).

On Oct. 30, 1987, Koresh (then Vernon Howell) came after the church property, he filed a claim on it in deed records. Years later, there are still conspiracies to steal our church property. Recently, Texas planned to run the Trans Texas Corridor over the church, memorial, cemetery and ruin. There seem to be plans to give the land to squatter, Charles Pace. These days, I'm a firm believer in Satan.

Taking the land is what happens when a church preaches the Kingdom of God coming forth in America. When the Kingdom of God takes over the whole world, the meek shall inherit the earth. (Matt. 5:5). In the Old Testament, the promise is stated like this. "But they shall sit EVERY MEN under HIS vine and under HIS fig tree; and no one shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it." (Micah 4:4). That means that God considers land ownership to be a human right. As you can guess, Satan hates that.

Efforts have been made to destroy the Branch Davidians from within by infiltrating agents provocateur into the membership and murdering those who blocked their rise to leadership. Particularly the undisputed leaders of the church have been targets because they insure church unity and growth. So it was that V.T .Houteff, the founder, prophet and undisputed leader of the Davidian Seventh Day Adventists, our predecessor church, (in the opinion of a number of church members) died by poison in 1955. Houteff did not sign his annual executive council appointments that year, he had no vice-president. Apparently he left the matter of his successor up to God.

Houteff's young widow, Florence, perhaps enticed by Tom Street, the attorney who eventually helped her sellout the church, claimed an unwitnessed deathbed appointment to the vice-presidency. Then she and Houteff's defunct executive council appointed each other and took over the church. Florence and her executive council were also trustees.

Ben Roden, a member in good standing, claimed an appointment from God to take over the church. Ben remained

associated with the church, writing open letters to Florence and sending his religious literature to members.

Following Houteff's plan, Florence and her executive council sold the 381 acres of Waco property for about \$500,000 and bought 941 acres near Elk, Texas. They built little houses and a church on the property. Florence predicted the end of the world in 1959. That disaster loosened her hold on the church and many members openly supported Ben Roden.

In 1962, Florence and her executive council passed a non majority dissolution of the church, denounced Houteff's message, sold 864 acres and split the money with her supporters, then moved to California. They left the last 77 acres with Tom Street as receiver. Tom Street tried to evict those living on the last 77 acres, who were continuing the church. They refused to go.

The resulting lawsuit was heard in the 19th District Court in 1966. The jury found that the dissolution was not done by a majority of members, that proxies were voted that had not been received, that there were two successor churches and that the second tithe was a retirement fund. Judge Bill Logue forced the sale of the last 8% of the property, using the retirement fund as his excuse. The resulting money, \$70,000, was to be split by all church members. The judge ignored the \$170,000 already paid out to Florence and her faction. Ben had an attorney, they appealed all the way to the Supreme Court of Texas.

There have been two land grabs, both ignored established principles of law. Either the court or Ben's attorney was remiss. The file was presented to me loose in a cardboard box, which it completely filled. I didn't have time to sort it out. Anyway, law and common law both more or less apply. The law relates to trusteeship. Trustees owe a good faith duty to the beneficiaries of a trust to preserve its assets and continue its stated purposes. The jury questions, which I saw in the courthouse on microfiche and also in Ben Roden's report of the trial, indicate that his lawyer did not raise the issue of the duties of trustees.

Schisms or splits in churches are dealt with primarily in the common law. Common law has its roots in the judgments of the Bible. It is essentially the application of equitable principles to disputes that come to judgment. Lawyers call it case law. In America, the settling of religious disputes or schisms is recorded in law libraries in such books as American Jurisprudence (Am.Jur.2d) Religious Societies Section.

To summarize the guiding principles: 1) where there is a mother church, those who cling to her teachings deserve the church property; 2) where there is no mother church, those who adhere to the founding principles of the church should get the property; 3) where there are accepted leaders before the schism, those who remain faithful to the original leadership should get the property.

Some of these issues are clear cut. The repudiation of the purpose of the trust (to proclaim the Kingdom of God founded on earth, the advent of the Biblical end-time, the judgment of the living, the call to the 144,000 of Rev. 7 and 14 and the unveiling of Biblical prophecy to lead God's people to safety during the destruction of the wicked - these were Houteff's stated purposes) was enough all by itself to establish failure of trusteeship duty. Added to this Florence and her executive council sold off the trust property and pocketed the proceeds. They were trustees from hell.

The common law is less clear in application. There was no mother church. The Rodens and those who were continuing the church remained faithful to Houteff and his teaching BUT unlike Houteff's church, they began keeping the Bible feastdays. What Houteff had placed in the future, Ben Roden said was now timely. And the jury accepted Florence and her executive council as the legitimate leadership of the church, even if they appointed each other and were faithless to Houteff's message. It is my opinion that, because the trusteeship issues were not raised, there was a conspiracy to destroy the remnant of Houteff's church.

Ben Roden stalled for seven years in the courts. Finally, in 1973, Ben had convinced 4/7th of the members of Houteff's church to refuse the court ordered settlement and retain their interest in the property. That reduced the price from \$70,000 to \$30,000 which Ben had in hand. Ben, his wife Lois and son George reclaimed the 77 acres as purchasers and trustees.

Ben Roden organized settlers rights in Israel in 1960 for the return of the scattered tribes. In the same year the church kept its first Passover on the church property.

In 1977, Ben's wife Lois saw a vision of shimmering angels which showed her that the Holy Spirit was female. She subsequently discovered that the original languages of the Bible indicated the Holy Spirit's femininity as did numerous Bible texts. Ben Roden accepted Lois' message before he died in 1978. Ben died at the age of 76. This is young for a clean living vegetarian. Many Branch Davidians believe he was also poisoned.

Ben's son and vice-president, George assumed the leadership and tried to force the church to go to Israel. The congregation asked Lois, the spiritual leader, to take over the church and she did, obtaining a permanent injunction in the 19th District Court barring George from claiming the presidency.

George moved to California. Vernon Howell aka David Koresh joined the church. In 1987 George showed me a sworn and witnessed statement by David Jones. Jones said he saw Vernon Howell (David Koresh's birth name) light the fire that destroyed the church's administration building and printing press in 1983, crippling its worldwide ministry.

About that time, Howell began a relationship with Lois Roden, 40 years his senior, which resulted in marriage. Howell used that marriage to humiliate Lois Roden and destroy her organization just as she was becoming a featured speaker at Christian conferences. There are clues that suggest that a rape began Howell's conquest of Lois Roden. George Roden believed it and sued Howell over it in Federal Court. My own experiences with undercover Feds. incline me to this view. There is no doubt in my mind that Howell aka Koresh was paid well to take down the Branch Davidian Church.

In 1984, George returned to the church property, called a church election and won convincingly. Koresh took his followers to Palestine, Texas. Early in 1985, George evicted his mother's executive council. They joined Koresh.

Lois Roden forsook her wrenching marriage to Koresh quickly. In her defense, Koresh took the \$800 gold chain she gave him as they wed and gave it to 14 year old Rachel Jones the same night while Rachel's father, Perry Jones, performed a wedding between Koresh and Rachel. At Koresh's request, Perry Jones, an ordained Branch Davidian minister, recorded the marriage with the State the next day. In November 1986, Lois Roden died. She had circled the globe three times preaching, and published "Shekinah" magazine and dozens of tracts. Eye witness Teresa Moore swears Lois was poisoned.

Almost a year after Lois died, Oct. 21, 1987, I married George by contract. A week later Koresh used most of Lois Roden's executive council to appoint him president. Executive council appointment is specifically forbidden by the church law, so Koresh knew George would protest. Koresh brought 7 followers, 3000 rounds and semi-automatic rifles onto the church property on Nov. 3, 1987 and opened fire on George. George was wounded in the hand and the chest during the shootout.

Four months later George was jailed for contempt of court and the next day Koresh took over the church property. Because George was in jail, I filed his lawsuit to remove Howell / Koresh. In the process, I became party to a legal action which has spanned 20 years.

In January of 1989, Judge Derwood Johnson dismissed our lawsuit by Summary Judgment, denying a jury. I had filed Howell's claim on the church presidency and trusteeship and the church law that forbid it. The judge ignored me. I took the case all the way to the US Supreme Court, but every level of the courts refused to hear it. Small wonder! There is no precedent for 10% of a church with a different religious message to get a church property. Every established principle of law and common law forbid Koresh's continuing to hold the church property.

To summarize the guiding principles once more: 1) where there is a mother church, those who cling to her teachings deserve the church property; 2) where there is no mother church, those who adhere to the founding principles of the church should get

**the property; 3) where there are accepted leaders before the schism, those who remain faithful to the original leadership should get the property.**

**First, the Koreshites did not adhere to the founding principles of the church, but changed a non-violent family values church to an armed communal church, where all the women belonged to Koresh. Their faction was less than 10% of the church. George Roden was president as successor to his father, anointed by his mother and by church election. Howell / Koresh was president by virtue of the appointment of Lois Roden's defunct executive council in violation of church law which likens an executive council to a presidential cabinet and specifically says the executive council can't appoint a president.**

**George Roden was named a trustee on the deed. Howell's first act as president was to dismiss George as trustee and appoint himself. Like his presidency, this should have had no legal force.**

**In the fall of 1989, George thwarted a second assassination attempt, killing his assailant Dale Adair in the process. After 14 months in custody, George agreed to change his plea to not guilty by reason of insanity. He spent his last 9 years of life in a psychiatric hospital for the criminally insane. Texas law specifies that any prisoner not tried within six months must be freed. George's court appointed attorney let him rot in jail.**

**Eventually, in the spring of 1993, God broke Koresh's hold on the church property as the ATF then the FBI went to war with Koresh. In 1993 and 1994, I defended the church property four times before judges who would not grant either my request for a jury or George Roden's request for a jury.**

**Initially the survivors of Koresh's church claimed the property by adverse possession, but they didn't have the required 5 years peaceable and exclusive possession. Then their attorney, Gary Coker tried to get a court order to sell the church property based on Koresh's claim. Shortly after the Standoff, my friend Joe Robert took me to McLennan County Deed Records and showed me that Koresh's claim was tied by volume and page number to an invalid deed. In 1973, one month before the repurchase of the property, Ben Roden filed a claim in Deed Records on the whole 941 acres the church had once owned. (Florence Houteff Eakin sold 864 of these acres in 1962. Ben would buy the other 77 acres in the next month.)**

**By the grace of God, that invalid deed became the deed of record, its volume and page number were recorded in the map room on the plat. Koresh's attorney, Wayne Martin, a graduate of Harvard Law was from Boston. He did not understand the size of an acre, so he never questioned the invalid deed. I filed Koresh's claim, the valid deed, the invalid deed and an explanation in the legal file just before the hearing, and gave copies to the assembled attorneys. Gary Coker dropped the request for court order to sell. The survivors subsequently self-appointed**

themselves trustees on three documents, in effect abandoning the claim Howell / Koresh filed in deed records in 1987.

The Texas Water Commission sought a court order to clean up the lead contamination, and eventually the survivor's attorney got a court order to sell the equipment. In August 1993, I moved onto the church property and opened it to the public. The case lapsed in 1994 and then returned to the courts in 1996 as the Koresh's survivors, led by Clive Doyle, tried to claim the property again.

In Dec. 1998, after I had made jury hearing inevitable, George Roden, the irrefutable trustee on the deed, died in suspicious circumstances. No one had ever removed George Roden as trustee from the valid deed. About a month before his death, Percy Isgitt, the survivor's attorney, told me that I could not defend George's trusteeship. I looked at him as if he was crazy. "Of course I can," I replied. (After all, I was a member of the church.) He ceased to argue. George died.

About 1999, while the lawsuit was still in District Court, Clive Doyle tried to evict me using a Commissioner's Court in Mart, Texas (Precinct 2). Judge Belinda Summers told him and his cohort Charles Pace that they needed a court order showing that they had the right to control the property.

In 2000, the jury ruled that Koresh's survivors were not trustees and neither was I. I thought that 2000 court order settled things because there were two churches on the property, the survivors of Koresh's church, led by Clive Doyle, and Charles Pace's church, which preached against Koresh. I left for four years to do literature evangelism at Bible Schools, Theological Seminaries and churches.

I returned to Waco in September 2004, and decided in November to make my home on the church property and rebuild a church and an office. I was wrong about the court order of 2000 settling things. I found myself in another war over the property. First, I had a showdown with Sheriff's deputies who threatened to arrest me for being on the property. Then WITHOUT A COURT ORDER, Clive Doyle and his cohort Charles Pace finished their fence and locked the gate they had built in 2000. They denied me a key. They began a program of harassment, vandalism, theft, assault and character assassination designed to drive me off the church property. Sheriff's deputies told me that because of the question about the ownership of the property, I had no protection except civil lawsuit. (So much for the seven years I spent in the courts getting that 2000 court order!)

My lawsuit was served on Clive Doyle and Charlie Pace both by Jan. 18, 2005. I immediately filed a motion for temporary injunction to force them to unlock the gate and to give me some degree of protection. After three postponements, my motion for temporary injunction was heard at 2PM on June 8, 2005. Doyle and Pace had obtained a free attorney, Bill Johnson, who was part of the cover-up, convicted of hiding information from the

Danforth investigation. He handed me papers he had just filed. His papers asserted that I had not shown a need for protection from irreparable harm. So although I showed the judge proof of harassment, assault, theft and vandalism from documents and pictures, perpetrated by people who had twice shot those who opposed them, the judge ruled that I had not shown immediate danger of irreparable harm.

All of this is not surprising; I have been the only person informing the public who was an eyewitness to what happened in the courts. Acting as my own attorney, I got an eyeful and earful. Also I saw George Roden wounded in the Koresh / Roden shootout (and saw what led up to those hostilities) and watched Koresh's hostile takeover of the property. Because I was on the property from August 1993 to 2000, I was able to do my own investigation (many people made a point of helping me) and document the cover-up and I still publish the results with copies of the hidden pictures. (See No. 3, "The Fire," and No. 4, "The Cover-up.") I also air David Koresh's dirty laundry. Shutting me up is a priority for many people. (For the continuation of this history, see No. 6, "King Of The Hill.")

Amo Paul Bishop Roden